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The Responsibility of the Left

THE EDITORS

Japan's New Vulnerability

HERBERT BIX

12/29/83

The Easter Rebellion: Defeat or Victory?

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CONTENTS VOLUME 34 NUMBER 7 DECEMBER 1982

REVIEW OF THE MONTH: The Responsibility of the Left
by the Editors 1
JAPAN'S NEW VULNERABILITY
by Herbert Bix 10
CAN NORTH AMERICAN SOCIOLOGY BE APPLIED TO CHINA?
by Douglas F. Daniels 19
THE EASTER REBELLION: DEFEAT OR VICTORY?
by John Newsinger 31
THESES ON THE CAPITALIST STATE
by Bertell Ollman 41
BOOKS: The Heart of the Matter
by Doug Dowd 48
Western Marxism
by Joel Kovel 56

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NOTES FROM THE EDITORS

This month's Review of the Month was written before the November 2nd elections. Its argument that the people of this country should give top priority to a demand for a WPA-type jobs program has been made more timely by the results of the elections. Reagan was obviously the chief loser, but it is by no means clear who was the winner, or indeed that there were any real winners except in a purely formal sense. Still, it seems to us that the American people could yet come out the winners provided they follow through with militant demands on the new Congress to take effective action against the disastrous consequences of Reaganomics. And we feel even more strongly than we did before the elections that top priority should go to the jobs program.

Washington politicians are apparently expecting such demands and are getting ready to claim that meeting them has been their own idea all along. This is especially true in the case of jobs: according to the newspapers, both Republicans and Democrats are preparing job bills for introduction into the upcoming session of the lame-duck Congress.

(continued on inside back cover)

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THE RESPONSIBILITY OF THE LEFT

As the Reagan administration nears the end of its second year in office, the U.S. economy is in a frightful shambles. The official (and seriously understated) unemployment rate is over 10 percent; 30 percent of manufacturing capacity lies idle; bankruptcies are soaring; and millions of people are living on the edge of starvation while agricultural surpluses pile up and farmers are driven off the land. In one breath Reagan blames it all on the Democrats, while in the next he boasts that the country is better off than when he took office.

Meanwhile the Democrats point the finger of blame at Reagan, conveniently overlooking the fact that his whole jerry-built program of tax cuts, slashes in social services, handouts to the Pentagon, and tight money could never have got off the ground without crucial support from Democrats in the House. Democratic presidential hopefuls like Kennedy, Mondale, Hart, Glenn, *et al* play it cagey, bad-mouthing their Republican opponents but failing to come up with anything remotely resembling a coherent set of alternative policies. The nearest thing to a program emanating from a Democratic source seems to be the brainchild of Felix Rohatyn, chairman of New York's Municipal Assistance Corporation (which helped to gut the city's social services in the sacred name of fiscal rectitude), who now is rumored to be angling for the job of Secretary of the Treasury in a future Democratic administration. In testimony before a

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House Banking Subcommittee on September 15th, Rohatyn is reported to have said:

> The United States is probably the only country in the world today whose biggest problems may also provide its biggest opportunities. Becoming self-sufficient in energy, rebuilding our basic industries and our oldest cities—there is work enough here for everyone in this country as far as the eye can see. Certainly we need tax cuts and regulatory reform and a balanced budget. But alone they will not do the job. Strong presidential leadership working with business and labor will be needed to make it happen. This may mean temporary government intervention to create a Reconstruction Finance Corporation, to tax gasoline at higher rates, to institute some form of national youth service if not the draft, to link inner-city school systems to new private employment opportunities, to dismantle farm support programs and other engines of inflation. It does not mean the end of the market system, no more than did the New Deal. On the contrary. However, it clearly does not mean laissez-faire. (*New York Times*, September 27, 1982)

At first glance this may look like a bold "new New Deal" program, but on closer examination it proves to be full of evasions and ambiguities. "Work enough for everyone" is a cliché, not a program to create jobs. To talk of the need for tax cuts and a balanced budget is to pander to the discredited supply-siders and monetarists at a time when the public needs as never before to be freed from all such reactionary prejudices. "Temporary government intervention" as a cure for a permanent condition is either stupid or dishonest. Under present circumstances "some form of national youth service" can only play into the hands of the militarists. Linking inner-city school systems to "new" but obviously nonexistent "private employment opportunities" is obfuscation pure and simple. Dismantling farm support programs at a time of acute agricultural crisis is a fine example of throwing the baby out with the bath water.

Still and all, one must agree that whatever else Rohatyn's proposals add up to, they don't mean the end of the "market system," i.e., production for profit, any more than the New Deal did. And it could have been added that the New Deal, for all its positive aspects, never pulled the country out of the Great Depression of the 1930s—that was the achievement of the Second World War.

Against this dismal background, what should be the re-

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sponsibility of the left? There would probably be general agreement that it is more necessary than ever to sustain and deepen our critique of the "market system" which generates and reproduces the most glaring ills from which the country suffers, all related directly or indirectly to the central paradox of severe deprivation and wanton waste in the midst of potential plenty. So far as the vast majority of the American people are concerned, this condition is perceived as an ineluctable part of the natural order of things, to be borne like the extremes of cold and heat inflicted by nature with the predictable regularity of seasonal change. So long as this attitude persists—and the whole institutional apparatus of the present order is devoted to upholding and strengthening it—there can be no meaningful politics of radical change in this country. It is in this sense that we wholeheartedly agree with Sheldon Wolin, professor of politics at Princeton and editor of the magazine *democracy*, when he writes:

> Nothing short of a long revolution, aimed at deconstituting the present structure of power, makes much sense. It is illusory to believe that the same modes of power that, by their constitution, use up humans, society, and nature at a fearful rate can simply be "turned around" and trained in a more benign direction; or that the same human dispositions toward power—passivity by the many, control by the few—will serve as well for a new social order as for the current one. (*democracy*, vol. 1, no. 1, p. 24)

But what are the requirements of a "long revolution"? Part of the answer of course is good theoretical and analytical work, effectively presented at various levels of popularization. But just as necessary is a directly political struggle to defend the interests of the exploited and victimized groups which together make up the great majority of the population. With few exceptions these people do not believe in the necessity, or even the possibility, of a long revolution aimed at changing the whole system. And yet they suffer every day in a thousand ways from the operation of the existing system. It is the responsibility of the left to help bridge this disjunction, to demonstrate that present ills like mass unemployment and colossal waste emanate not from God or nature but from an internally self-contradictory *social* order which has evolved in the past and can be changed in the future.

How to discharge this responsibility is a question, seldom

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explicitly posed, which underlies many of the differences which divide the left. There are those who believe that most people are too preoccupied with day-to-day problems to be concerned about overall change and that the left should therefore focus its energies on providing militancy and leadership to the myriad struggles which spontaneously erupt around specific issues. The weakness of this strategic conception, as we see it, is that it effectively deprives the left of any unifying themes which might ultimately form the cement of a viable "long-revolutionary" movement.

At the other extreme are those who are convinced that day-to-day struggles, even if seemingly successful in the short run, only feed into the illusory processes of bourgeois politics and for this reason may even be counter-productive. This attitude leads to a phenomenon which has been repeated many times in the history of radical movements, i.e., a sort of revolutionary purism which isolates its adherents from any effective integration with mass movements.

Between these two positions—concentration on spontaneous struggles and revolutionary purism—there are varying views of how to combine immediate political engagement with undiminished commitment to the long revolution. Many, perhaps even most, of these seem to involve the presentation of more or less elaborate schemes for dealing with what are seen as our most pressing ills while still remaining within the framework of the "market system." Is the problem one of inadequate and/or misdirected investment? What more logical and just than mobilizing the many billions of dollars of corporate pension funds, held in trust for the workers, to expand and redirect the flow of investment into socially needed projects. Or is the problem one of faltering productivity resulting in lower profits and loss of jobs by American workers? What better or more desirable remedy than giving workers themselves increased control over what goes on at the point of production as well as in corporate affairs generally. Similarly with many other problems which are being obviously neglected or mismanaged under the present system—deterioration of the country's infrastructure of dams, bridges, sewer systems, highways, mass transport, etc., which is already reaching disastrous proportions; misdirection of huge flows of credit needed for housing and other constructive purposes into patently un- and counter-productive channels of waste and

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speculation. Is it not the responsibility of the left to analyze these and many other problems and to come up with fair and democratic solutions which broad masses of people can understand, which will raise their political consciousness, and around which they can begin to form a meaningful radical movement?

Unfortunately we have to answer no to this question, despite the fact that it puts us in opposition to many of our friends on the left with whom we would gladly be in agreement. It is not that we want to minimize the importance of issues of this kind. And, to be sure, we are not arguing against the need for militant struggle to protect the people's welfare. But we do want to emphasize that the primary social problems of our day are not due to mismanagement or stupidity on the part of the ruling class. For all the mistakes they have made, the root of this country's troubles rests in the market system that serves the profit interests of the capitalist class. More intelligent management can at best patch up some of the sores, while new ones keep cropping up. It is not *our* business to tell *them* how to solve the problems created by *their* system. To put the point in other terms, you cannot consistently believe in the necessity of a long revolution in the sense indicated above and at the same time recommend reforms which couldn't possibly be put into effect without the change in the structure of power which is of the very essence of that revolution. And this is quite apart from another question: whether the recommended reforms would have anything resembling their intended effects if enacted under the present power situation—not to mention whether they would be either relevant or appropriate in a post-revolutionary society.

Perhaps it will be said that those advocating reforms that go against the grain of the present system know that they will not be enacted or, if enacted, will either be rendered ineffectual or be put to purposes other than, and often opposite to, those intended. (A good example with which many readers of these lines will be all too familiar is the long series of "full-employment" acts and proposals going back to the period immediately after the Second World War.) These advocates may believe that in spite of this, or perhaps even because of it, proposing such reforms is a useful way of educating people to the inherent weaknesses and limitations of the system and thus bringing them to an awareness of the need for fundamental change.

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Unfortunately long experience shows that things do not work out this way. Non-starting reforms or reforms that are twisted to serve purposes other than those intended are soon treated like the phoney promises of politicians: they induce not an awareness of the need for change but cynicism about the possibility of change. For the left to get involved in this game is simply to guarantee its own short-run impotence and its long-run irrelevance.

In our view the attitude and role of the left should be quite different. We should be taking the lead in telling the American people the unvarnished truth about their present situation:

> Most of you are hurting, and those who are not may soon be in the same boat. A small minority of the rich and the privileged are in full control and treat the vast majority with undisguised contempt. It is futile and degrading for you to tell your rulers how they should be running the system they control. They will look after themselves; and if you let them get away with it, they will do so increasingly at your expense. You should simply make plain to them that you regard it as your birthright, deeply rooted in the country's whole history, that whatever system is in operation at any time has the obligation to provide you with a decent standard of living and reasonable security. This is no pipe-dream. Long experience, especially in wartime, suggests that the physical output of goods and services in this country could easily be doubled. The resources, the skills, the know-how are all there. Putting them together is the responsibility of those in control, and they should be held strictly accountable. If they fail, you, the people, have a right to draw whatever conclusions you deem necessary and appropriate, even if this means embarking on a new course designed to take control into your own hands.

What would be the appropriate follow-up to such a declaration? In our opinion the answer is quite simple: a demand for a comprehensive program to provide jobs for all who need them. And here, fortunately, the New Deal of the 1930s established a precedent and fashioned a model which can and should be an inspiration and a guide for us today, a half century later. Most of the New Deal's achievements—in the fields of industry, agriculture, labor relations, wages and hours, unemployment insurance and social security, etc.—had already been pioneered by other advanced capitalist countries years or even decades earlier. But there was one area, the governmental creation of jobs to

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cope with unprecedentedly heavy mass unemployment, in which the record of the New Deal was both innovative and unique. There is no space here to review the legislative and administrative history of the various agencies and programs which formed part of this effort. Suffice it to say that the first of them was initiated in May 1933, two months after Roosevelt took office; that already during the winter of 1933–34 there were over four million people on the work-relief rolls; that following Roosevelt's impressive endorsement in the Congressional elections of 1934 an emergency relief appropriation of $5 billion (unprecedented at the time) was passed and made possible the development of the system to its highest form in the WPA (Works Progress Administration originally, changed to Works Projects Administration in 1939); that the whole program began to be phased out after New Deal setbacks in the Congressional elections of 1938 and was finally merged into the growing rearmament effort after the war broke out in Europe in 1939. Several facts need to be understood about this whole experience.

(1) It was directed and guided throughout by Harry Hopkins, a social worker by background whom Roosevelt brought to Washington with him. Hopkins was a sensitive, able, energetic, compassionate human being and administrator. Without these qualities, and without Roosevelt's strong and continuous support, the WPA (using the term for the program as a whole) would obviously have been very different from what it was. Nevertheless it owed its existence and continuation to the end of the 1930s to the fear of the U.S. ruling class that without a massive relief effort the capitalist system itself would break down. Roosevelt of course shared this fear. There is a lesson in this for everyone today: if the U.S. ruling class does *not* perceive and fear the possibility of a breakdown of the system, no large-scale programs to alleviate unemployment will be undertaken.

(2) The WPA, thanks largely to Hopkins' insistence, saw its function as that of creating jobs for people who needed them where they were and as they were, with their great variety of backgrounds, experience, interests, and inclinations. It was not simply a program to create so and so many jobs, it was a program to create jobs for a large number of individual human beings. This accounts for the astonishing variety of specific projects set in motion all over the country. It also accounts for the

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fact that the WPA created a number of sub-agencies—the Federal Theater Project, the Federal Writers Project, the Federal Arts Project, and the National Youth Administration—which did more to elevate the cultural level of the country than any government ever did, before or after. And at the same time they infuriated the most bourgeois of all ruling classes, which saw in the whole WPA only one giant "boondoggle." But the people liked the WPA: public-opinion polls consistently showed strong percentages in favor.

It seems safe to say that the WPA was by far the most radical component of the New Deal, in fact the only one that, regarded in retrospect, can be considered to have had an anti-capitalist orientation. It was concerned with workers as human beings and with labor as producer of use values, and these are profoundly anti-capitalist attitudes. Unfortunately, however, the circumstances of its demise prevent us from forming any judgment on its ultimate meaning. There was no spontaneous recovery of the U.S. economy in the 1930s, and if the war had not intervened there is no telling how long the depression would have lasted or what struggles would have developed over continuing joblessness and its attendant ills. The ruling class was clearly tired of the WPA—and of other aspects of the New Deal—before the war broke out and was already moving after the 1938 elections toward more openly reactionary positions. But the war and its aftermath changed all that, and we can't even begin to guess what would have happened if the depression had dragged on.

What we can say, however, is that in a very real sense history is inviting us to a re-run of the old scenario. Mass unemployment is back again and gives no signs of improving. Quite the contrary. There are doubtless those who think the surest and best way out would be the same as before—war. But for a variety of reasons, not least the danger of self-annihilation via nuclear escalation, this is a "salvation" that even the most dedicated hawks hesitate to reach for.

Under these circumstances, it looks as though the unfinished questions of the 1930s, mass unemployment foremost among them, are returning to the historical agenda. We cannot of course predict how they will be resolved (or evaded) this time around. But we—and by this we mean the U.S. left as a whole—

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at least have in the WPA an enormously interesting and promising precedent to evoke. That it is one our rulers would prefer to consign to oblivion is all the more reason for our putting it at the very center of our theoretical, educational, and political work.

(October 10, 1982)

Theodore Roosevelt:

The simple truth is that there is nothing even remotely resembling "imperialism" or "militarism" involved in the development of that policy of expansion which has been part of the history of America from the day she became a nation. The word means absolutely nothing as applied to our present policy in the Philippines; for this policy is only imperialistic in the sense that Jefferson's policy in Louisiana was imperialistic; only military in the sense that Jackson's policy toward the Seminoles or Custer's toward the Sioux embodied militarism.

Campaigns and Controversies in *The Works*, XIV, 368

Nothing imperialistic about U.S. policies; it's just that the world rightly belongs to us Americans.

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JAPAN'S NEW VULNERABILITY

BY HERBERT P. BIX

It is said that neither oil shocks, global stagflation, nor chronic monetary instability wilted Japan's "fragile blossom" in the 1970s. And that is undoubtedly true: the nation's economic performance surpassed all rivals. But successful adjustment to conditions of global economic crisis has, by its own internal dialectic, altered the structure of Japan's economy and increased its vulnerability. Three major changes stand out.

During most of the 1970s, Japan's key manufacturing sector virtually stagnated in absolute terms while the relative ratio of employment in the tertiary industries (with notable exceptions in the public and private service sectors) grew to be larger than tertiary employment in the United States. This first major structural change in the Japanese economy had a number of causes, notably OPEC's price increases of late 1973-74. Coming on top of the abandonment of the fixed and artificially low yen/dollar exchange rate, the first postwar yen appreciation, the start of the floating currency exchange system, and the fourth Middle East War, the OPEC increases immediately plunged Japan into a two-year recession, ending nearly 17 years of exceptionally rapid growth which began in 1955, shortly after the "procurements boom" triggered by the Korean War had begun to dry up. During this period and especially from late 1965 to 1972—the years of the Vietnam war "special procurements" boom—the number of new jobs created

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annually in the important secondary and tertiary sectors expanded steadily. Simultaneously, employment in the primary industries—agriculture, fisheries, and mining—continued to decline, providing industry with a supply of cheap, tractable labor.

Both trends continued after the first oil shock. Employment in the primary sector declined from 17.4 percent of the total labor force in 1970 to 11.2 percent in 1979. But, for the first time, the secondary sector—the crucial goods-producing industries that rely heavily on oil—stopped growing. This sector employed 35.2 percent of the total workforce in industry during 1975-76 and 34.4 percent during 1978-79. The secondary sector's contribution to national income also declined, from 38 percent in 1970 to 35 percent in 1976.

In sharp contrast, the tertiary sector continued to expand throughout the 1970s, swelling from 47.3 to 54.4 percent of the workforce. Increasingly, Japanese have been taking jobs in public and private service-connected industries, which encompass a broad spectrum of occupations in food service, hotels, communications, finance, advertising, medical and health care, education, and social welfare. This development has had a negative impact on Japanese labor, since many of these jobs are temporary and part-time, working conditions are less desirable, and the threat of layoffs greater than in the manufacturing sector. At the same time, organized labor is now less able to enforce workers' wage demands. In 1970, 35.4 percent of Japan's workforce was organized; by 1979 the number had fallen to 31.6 percent, and the decline continues, mainly in the large enterprises employing over 1,000 workers. Recently, many of these industries have begun to abandon "lifetime employment," sloughing off older workers by forcing them to retire early. They are also stepping up their dependence on subcontractors and outside workers, both of whom receive lower wages and enjoy few fringe benefits.

The second of the three major changes referred to above occurred within the industrial sector itself. Although the relative weight of heavy and chemical industries did not change much during the 1970s, Japanese manufacturers concentrated more on remaining competitive in world markets; and government and industry stepped up their investment in re-

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search and development (R and D) in order to pioneer new types of products. By 1979 Japan was spending $17.5 billion on R and D, about 2.3 percent of its GNP. Nowadays many industries are reducing their dependency on imported U.S. technology and becoming net exporters of technology to both the Third World and other advanced economies.

Further, Japan managed to stabilize oil and gas consumption within the steel industry, which leveled off by 1980 at approximately 6 million kiloliters, two fifths the 1973 amount. In 1980 Japan needed 40 kilograms of heavy oil to produce a ton of steel, while the United States and West Germany used 58 and 52 kilograms respectively. Recently, to reduce the country's dependence on oil for electric power generation and aluminum refining, the government launched a major drive to import vast quantities of steam coal and coking coal, much of it from the United States. And, despite the accident and cover-up in 1981 at the Tsuruga nuclear power plant in Fukui prefecture, the bureaucracy, led by the Ministry of Trade and Industry (MITI), is pushing plans to complete 14 new nuclear power facilities in addition to the 24 Japan already has. This drive will benefit Toshiba, Hitachi, and Mitsubishi Heavy Industries, among others, though it may also succeed in making Japan, by the end of the present decade, number one in nuclear pollution.

Since 1973, growth rates have climbed in industries making precision machinery, pharmaceutical and medicinal products, electrical machines, automobiles, and other transport machinery (with the exception of ships). These high-value-added industries increased dramatically in the late 1970s, while others heavily dependent on costly energy-consuming raw materials, such as steel, most chemicals, and non-ferrous metals, temporarily lost ground. The stagnation of the basic heavy industries continued after oil prices doubled again following the 1978 Iranian revolution. A new spurt of investment in 1978-79 further stimulated the high-value-added industries. By promoting rationalization, energy conservation, and ever more stringent management practices, capitalists and bureaucrats have managed to sustain this growth.

And so the Japanese economy has successfully completed its shift from an economy dominated by heavy industry and

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chemicals, as in the 1960s and early 1970s, to one specializing in the 1980s on the mass production of highly sophisticated electronics and machine production, not to mention expensive entertainment goods easily dispensed with in a deepening global economic slump.

To recapitulate: the two oil crises hastened the maturation of Japan's sophisticated mass-production industries and its tertiary sector at the expense of its heavy manufacturing and chemical industries. The economy then shifted to a low-growth pattern, with machinery and electronics production dominating the manufacturing sector. This transformation can be explained by a combination of factors characteristic of the stagflationary crisis of the 1970s. Point by point, they were: rising primary commodity prices, competition from the newly industrializing countries in exports of light manufactured products, and increasing trade friction between Japan and the United States and Western Europe, whose average real GNP growth-rates over the period were usually half of Japan's 6 percent.

The third change in the Japanese economy during the 1970s was a rise in exports which compensated for a relatively slower rate of growth of domestic demand. It was also during this period that Japan became a major long-term exporter of capital to the rest of the world. (The forms of Japan's long-term capital export have been on the one hand "tied" loans and "foreign aid" to Third World countries, and on the other hand direct investments in North America, Western Europe, South Africa, Australia, and the Third World—in that order.)

The most striking manifestation of this change in Japan's international role has been a very sharp growth in the country's export surplus with its keenest trade rivals (and "trilateral" partners, Western Europe and the United States). In the case of the United States the export surplus, after averaging between $7 and $8 billion in the four years 1977-80, shot up to $16 billion in 1981, and is estimated by U.S. officials to reach well over $20 billion in 1982.

This explosion of Japan's export surplus with its chief rivals and partners has of course led to rising protectionist sentiments in Europe and the United States and growing pressure on Japan to open up its domestic market to foreign imports. At the same

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time, partly supplementing and partly counteracting these mounting frictions, the Reagan administration has greatly intensified Carter's policy of pushing Japan's military build-up and encouraging Tokyo to play a more active role in defense of capitalism's economic and strategic interests in East Asia. Militarily, Washington wants to base American nuclear weapons in Japan and turn the islands into a communications center for Trident submarines and nuclear-armed bombers.

The Reagan approach is likely to result in more sales of military hardware and warplanes to Tokyo, good news for the U.S. military-industrial complex. There will also be new "special procurements" for Japan's military-related industries, perhaps in the form of an agreement whereby Tokyo will expand its participation in the joint development of sophisticated weapons involving the use of technology in which Japanese industry may be slightly ahead, such as lasers, certain types of electronics, and fiber optics. For arms salesmen and influence-peddling politicians this will mean additional income; for the Japanese people it may portend a new round of corruption scandals, with a consequent further deterioration in the quality of political life. This U.S.-Japan cooperation in the field of military technology will go forward despite industrial spy scandals and trade friction.

The other relevant aspects of Japan's trade structure and their consequences, may be briefly summarized as follows:

- With the politically unstable oil-producing countries of the Middle East, as with resource-rich Australia and Canada, Japan runs large and chronic trade deficits. Its trade balances are heavily in the black, however, with most oil-poor newly developing countries in Latin America and Africa, as well as with Singapore, Hong Kong, and Thailand in Southeast Asia.
- With the "socialist" bloc, Japanese trade, though productive of surpluses, is still not economically significant. But the rate at which it grows in the 1980s could have an important effect on existing political and strategic configurations in East Asia. Sino-Japanese trade in particular has been growing in recent years, making China, for the time being, Japan's most important Communist trading partner. In 1977 China took 2.3 percent of Japan's exports; by 1980 it accounted for nearly 4 percent of Japan's exports and 3 percent of its imports. The

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further growth of this trade, even at a reduced rate could help to reinforce the *de facto* U.S.-China-Japan security system which the Reagan administration is seeking to forge against the Soviet Union. However, as industrial and financial groups in both the United States and Japan have discovered in recent years, China's international economic policies are not very reliable, and its capacity for absorbing long-term projects is uncertain.

It is not China but the Soviet Union which, for both Japan and the United States, is more important than politically unstable China. The USSR took only 2.14 percent of Japan's total exports in 1980 (chiefly metal products, iron and steel, chemicals and textiles) and accounted for only 1.3 percent of Japan's imports (timber, natural gas, oil and petroleum products, raw cotton, etc.). But this could change quickly if the political atmosphere improves. What Moscow buys from the West it pays for in cash, gold, and other precious metals, including even enriched uranium. Currently, Japanese capital is considering supplying loans as well as special cold-resistant pipe for the $10-billion Soviet pipeline project that will carry natural gas from western Siberia to terminals in West Germany, France, and other European countries. If the U.S. economy continues to weaken, and Moscow alters its attitude on the disputed southern Kurile Islands, neither Washington's efforts to tighten up COMECON restrictions against the Soviet Union in the wake of the Polish crisis, nor Japan's present anti-Soviet mood, would suffice to deter Japanese businessmen from exploiting the potentially lucrative and secure Soviet market.

- In the late 1970s, the Asia region became Japan's fastest growing and its second most important trading area after the United States. Among the highly heterogeneous economies of this vast region, the former Japanese colonies of South Korea and Taiwan, plus the ASEAN nations (Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Thailand, and Singapore) occupy a special place. By continuing in a neocolonial relationship with Japan, the ruling elites of these countries have allowed the Japanese to regionalize their "dual economy" of the 1930s and early postwar days. In the process, they have reinforced Japan's traditional position as the area's metropolis. Because Japan is not subject here to the restrictions which mark its horizontal trading ties

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with the nine European Common Market nations and the United States, the East Asian periphery functions as Japan's regional sweat shop and buffer zone. Except for Indonesia, which furnishes about 15 percent of Japan's oil imports, virtually all the countries of this region import from Japan much more than they export, and these huge trade surpluses help to insulate Japan from shocks at the global level. They also absorb the environmental costs for pollution-intensive Japanese factories. And all furnish Japanese industry with large reserve armies of offshore labor held at a distance—without the social and political costs of "guest workers."

The Japanese people have displayed great pragmatism, up to now, in their international economic affairs. This is in line with Japan's prewar tradition as a great commercial power and the installation in the postwar era of a paternalistic and relatively non-repressive state, capped by the 1947 Constitution which allows for considerable democracy, a sense of human rights among the people, and the airing of a greater variety of ideological viewpoints than in the United States. If, however, the Reagan administration continues its present policies, and the corporatist tendencies of Japan's ruling class are not restrained by the Constitution's anti-war and human-rights provisions, Japan could again become a closed, politically repressive society. If that should happen, it is doubtful that Japan could maintain its pre-eminence in world commerce and its reasonably amicable relations with Asian neighbors.

Japan's economy is a study in rapidly emerging structural changes at a time when its ruling elites are moving toward a new consensus on the primacy of foreign over domestic affairs, and are renewing their efforts to consolidate the postwar state, stimulate more patriotism, increase military spending, and weaken organized labor.

The revival of Japanese militarism could have profound economic consequences. Already in the 1970s state expenditures and taxes were beginning to increase. In the 1980s rising taxes can be expected to widen the gap between income levels in Japanese society and to have a negative long-term effect on the distribution of national wealth. Meanwhile, the structural changes surveyed above have been accompanied by extraordinarily sharp increases in government spending and debt

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stemming from budgetary deficits. By 1981 the government sector debt amounted to 43 percent of Japan's GNP—in relative terms one of the largest, if not the largest, in the capitalist world. And in that year, for the first time in the postwar period, real wages failed to increase over the previous year. This stagnant trend in real wages continues. Major reductions in social welfare and educational spending, as well as sharp increases in tax rates, seem to be in prospect. The financial margin has been narrowing with which to cover "exceptional increases" in military spending, such as the nearly 8 percent increase agreed to for 1982 and the 11 percent sought by the Defense Agency for 1983. Today Japan spends a substantial 1.6 percent of its huge GNP on "defense." But, despite its new economic power, the Japanese government can only go on building military might hereafter at the cost of lowering the people's living standards.

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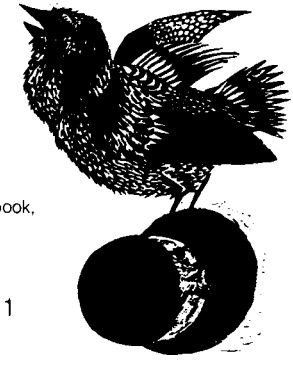

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CAN NORTH AMERICAN SOCIOLOGY BE APPLIED TO CHINA?

BY DOUGLAS F. DANIELS

It is truly an honor for me to address you tonight. I say this not just to be polite but because I hope this talk can be an example for many more frank and open discussions with foreign guests. In recent years in China this was not possible. I stress the points "frank and open" because sociology is a discipline that has a lot to do with politics. If I can't talk about the politics involved in sociology then I can't say anything worthwhile, and if I can't do that I would rather not say anything at all. As a part of the whole truth I think it is necessary to make some small, tentative statements about certain dangers of applying North American sociology in China. To say less would be dishonest. This is because I believe that China is quite excited about many American things and how they can contribute to its four modernizations. Thus China appears to be attracted to the sociology used by the world's wealthiest country. I will argue in my talk that you cannot separate the technique and the politics of North American sociology and that attempts to do so can lead to dead ends and political problems as well.

In some ways China's desire to know about sociology reminds me of a common story about European Christian missionaries abroad. Their followers keep asking them for "the other part" of the Christian Bible. When the missionaries reply, truthfully, that they have already given out the whole Bible,

The author teaches sociology at the University of Regina, Saskatchewan, Canada. This is the text of a lecture delivered to Chinese audiences during the spring of 1981.

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the followers say, "But you didn't give us the part about how to get rich like you Europeans." In the Bible of American sociology there is no magic answer to fast modernization for China.

Of course sociology does have ideological uses, very much like religion. Probably this is its main function, for although there are relatively few sociological researchers and policy-makers there are thousands of professors, and almost every student in North America takes at least one sociology class. Sociologists are also popular commentators on radio, TV, and in magazines. Some sociologists have pointed this out themselves and have remarked that sociology has grown in North America at the same time as religion has declined. I would agree that the practical work that sociologists do for private industry and government is limited. It is not nearly as significant as that done by economists, for example, and the sociologists' more important function is probably to spread the ideology of the status quo of capitalism. Indeed it is a real myth that sociologists have some sort of special analytical powers that foreign countries can copy. It was Mao's "sociological" analysis of the peasants in China, for example, that enabled him to lead a revolution. That was excellent sociology, if you want to call it that; so was the research of the Chinese cadres who went to the land of the Yi people and studied the classes of slaves, freemen, and aristocrats to see how to win as many people as possible to the freeing of the slaves. So there is no secret to the sociological method. If one must point to a special technical strength in North American sociology, I suppose it would be in marketing and business administration. This too has been linked to thought-control and domination of workers. So once again I would argue that there are no great secrets to North American sociology methods and techniques, and that they are tied to the politics of capitalism. But let me get down to basics and give you an outline of this evening's talk.

I have pointed out the linkage between ideology and method in North American sociology and will repeatedly return to this theme. Secondly, I will demonstrate that there are no clear boundaries to the discipline of sociology, no unified theory nor a drive to a unified theory, and that the resulting confusion fits the ideological functions of sociology. Third, I will point out what sociologists actually do for the North

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American state and private industry. Fourth, I will give you some examples of the problems with North American sociological theory and the possible dangers of applying it to China. I will point out a few positive directions and then deal with the relationship between ethnology and sociology.

Asking me to talk about North American sociology is a lot like asking me to talk about North American birds. It is almost impossible because they range from chickens to eagles to seagulls and buzzards and hummingbirds—and there is at least as much variety in North American sociology. I will give you some examples from our sociology aviary in a minute. Still, I had thought I could state at least a few general truths, like saying that "all birds fly." But I cannot. Just as ostriches and roadrunner birds do not fly, we cannot say that all North American sociology is idealist, nor even that it is entirely pro-capitalist. Indeed the most exciting and creative social science in North America today is coming from those theorists who do not see capitalism as the final and highest stage of human evolution. These are Marxist of course. It is this dynamic and promising school that I will return to at the conclusion of my talk today.

But first let me give you some examples of the variety of North American sociology. We of course have specializations which are so tiny that one wonders if they can ever be fitted into the larger goal of understanding humanity as a whole—the supposed original goals of sociology—sociology of music, sociology of sport, sociology of so-called total institutions like jails and mental hospitals, sociology of religion, of the family, dance, adolescence, aging, social problems, minorities, and so on. Nothing is too small, not even the sociology of bicycle-riding. Within universities, sociology departments try to steal students from other disciplines by offering courses like "sociology of personality" to attract students from psychology, while psychology departments set up something called "social psychology" to attract students from sociology. The same process lies behind specializations like "sociology of politics," "sociology of law," "sociology of education," and so on. So you have, on the one hand, overspecialization, and on the other, imperialism between the specializations.

Well, if you have diversity at the practical or "empirical" level of fields of study, are all these fields at least tied together

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by a common theory? Not at all! There are almost as many theories as there are theoreticians, and their variety borders on chaos. Moreover there exists no drive to a unified theory. You can believe what you want. Thus North American sociology cannot be called a science if we agree that science always searches for unified theory. Once again let me give you some examples. We have extreme idealists who think the whole world occurs inside people's heads. For example, the school called "symbolic interactionism" studies such profound questions as: How much am *I* really like the *me* that I present to other people on the surface of my personality? How much do other people's perceptions of me determine what I think of myself? Or, to put it more simply, who the heck am I anyway?! It should be fairly obvious to you that it would be quite difficult to develop a worthwhile analysis of underdevelopment and modernization out of such a theory. At the other extreme, we have vulgar materialists whose theoretical goal is to banish thought entirely. These fellows *do* take on significant issues like underdevelopment. They try to explain it in terms of protein and calorie exchange between rich and poor nations, and try to get rid of all talk of politics, ideology, imperialism, and so on. This school reduces humans to mere appetites. For example, one disciple of the so-called cultural materialist school—whose aim is to purge dialectics from Marxism and leave just the materialism—suggests that Third World peoples are having so many children because they are preparing a surplus of people for the war required to get their hands on North America's resources. The point I'm making here is not so much that this theory gives birth to fascist claptrap. More to the point of today's talk is that students new to North American sociology might have to treat all these theoretical schools with equal seriousness and credibility—unless they quickly find a guide to take them through the jungle.

Some North American social scientists have said that we are waiting for the American equivalent of the Greek philosopher Aristotle, who pulled together all the diverse data and theories of the philosophers who preceded him. Let me suggest to you today that that is not going to happen, and it is far more likely that North American sociological theory will continue to decay into irrelevant specialization and fantastic theory at the same

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time as the American empire declines. I am not saying that there is nothing to learn from North American sociology. I am only saying that the enthusiasm China is showing for American technological know-how should not be generalized to include North American sociology. China is showing an interest in North American sociology precisely at the time when the most lively and innovative minds in North America are abandoning it and developing a rejuvenated Marxism. So this is really a time for you to feel the tomatoes before you buy any.

Even without any clear theory, sociologists do a lot of work for private industry and the state in North America. Such people are not simply sociologists, but often have other social science training in economics, business administration, and so on. Though their theory may not be unified, their goal is absolutely clear: to maximize efficiency and profits for capitalism.

Many of the sociologists in private industry are "efficiency experts." They figure out ways to make people work harder, with more intensity, usually more boredom, less skill, fewer rest breaks, and so on. To put it simply, they specialize in making workers as miserable as necessary to increase productivity and profits. Their efficiency creates unemployment by working fewer workers harder. The workers that remain suffer more from stress, diseases, mental breakdown, alcoholism, and so on. At this point the state sociologists step in to study alcoholism, industrial accidents, and so forth. When the workers rebel against their condition, still other sociologists specialize in management-labor relations to smooth over the problems. This is the typical way of operating in capitalism—private industry creates the problem and the state cleans it up and pays the bill for the damages out of workers' taxes.

Other practical sociologists specialize in policy-making for government and private industry. A lot of their work is research on "socio-economic impact studies." For example, if the government wants to build a dam in Indian country they will study how many Indian traplines, cabins, etc., would be flooded, and then they balance the social costs against the economic benefits. Some friends and I worked on such a study but were soon replaced by sociologists more open to the flooding than we were. Our country and government have a long-standing practice of choosing the sociologists who will give them the answers they

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want. Another example in my province was a socio-economic study of uranium mining. Large numbers of ecologists, local farmers near the projected uranium processor, anti-war activists, physicists, and others bitterly opposed to the project mounted a very impressive campaign against it. The government found some sociologists who dismissed all the arguments and ordered the project to go ahead. The uranium companies also hired sociologists to argue in favor of the project. So even if sociologists can't agree on a theory, they can agree to serve those who pay them. Still other sociologists specialize in marketing, including the "selling" of political candidates to the voters. These are publicity experts for their employers. More on this later.

None of this should be surprising, if the Marxist theory of the state has any truth at all. One may still ask if the methods of capitalist sociology might be applied in more positive ways in another social system, like socialism. Statistics on unemployment, seasonal and regional variations in production, demography, and so on, are highly developed. But each of these "hard" sciences tend to overlap into fields like geography and economics. Even these fields have elements of politics, as, for example, in the constant government manipulation of the methods for measuring unemployment and inflation rates.

Certainly administration and efficiency studies have some usefulness for measuring the number of workers necessary for a job. I myself see what appear to be too many workers in your hotels, for example. But the whole purpose of capitalist efficiency is to extract as much value from workers as possible, not to create a well-rounded, healthy, skilled, intellectually alive worker and human being. So such methods are far from neutral and must be examined with the greatest caution. I know a lot of Chinese students are coming to Canada to study business administration, and I hope they remember to be cautious in transferring such methods to a socialist society.

Another very common activity of sociologists is taking political opinion surveys. They can put a question to anyone in the street like "Do you think immigrants cause unemployment?" or "Do you think the Western provinces should separate from Canada?" These surveys are very accurate in the sense of finding out what various sex, age, education, and regional groups

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believe. But they never find out the actual truth of the situation or the justice of the opinion. A thousand uninformed opinions and prejudices do not make a truth. Such surveys tend to be used opportunistically by our politicians. For example, 15 percent of my province's people said we should separate from Canada and 85 percent said we should stay in. So one of our leaders said he could sympathize with the grievances that made people want to separate, but listed many reasons why we should stay in Canada. His position was like that of the survey—15 percent in favor, 85 percent opposed. Such behavior may get him elected but does not solve the real problem. Thus North American politics is greatly distorted by this product of North American sociology.

* * *

Perhaps some of you think the examples I have given are too extreme and that there must be more sensible theories in the middle than the ones I have described. Let me now deal with the questions of the international applicability of *mainstream* theory from North America. I will do this by looking at two examples: the analysis of social problems and social class in North American mainstream sociology. First, social problems.

Some Chinese friends have told me that in the Gang of Four period no one in the party or government would admit that there were social problems in China like juvenile delinquency, child beating, and so on. In Marxist theory it was supposed to be impossible for these things to happen in socialism; thus, thinking about social problems was repressed. So now that there is a more open intellectual climate in China, many Chinese seem to hope that the substantial body of literature on social problems in North America will help them with similar problems in China. I think this is only partly true.

First of all, I think that the problem under the Gang of Four was not so much inadequate theory as it was a political manipulation to protect the government and leaders of China from criticism. After all, if one admitted that there was juvenile delinquency, then the party must be making some serious mistakes in their policy for young people.

Second, since it is likely true that a mechanical version of

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Marxism does not have much to say about such problems, what can China learn from North American sociology? Here the answer is heavily loaded with political consequences, for China as well as North America.

Take the example of child abuse. A graduate student of mine is finishing her master's thesis on child abuse. All the mainstream North American theory says that child beating happens in all classes, rich or poor, all races, religions, and so on. Mainstream theorists say it is caused by heavy psychological problems in the parents—lack of affection when they themselves were children, lack of parents that they could respect, even bad toilet training. Yet this graduate student found that the only people who had cases of child abuse where the state intervened were young, divorced or unmarried, poor women of Indian ancestry who had trouble finding residences for themselves and their children. These material factors were utterly ignored by mainstream theorists. The lawyers and psychologists interrogated the young women much like witch-hunters of medieval Europe, looking for the psychological weaknesses that supposedly caused the abuse. No doubt the young women were distraught and disturbed. You would be too if you were unemployed, single, poor, and unable to find a place to live for yourself and your children because you were from a national minority against which landlords showed racial prejudice. But of course to look at all these things would require mainstream theorists to rock the boat, to raise a fuss, to risk their careers by criticizing the ruling class and government in North America. So instead of doing all this they invent great sociopsychological theories about bad mothers. Let me put it to you directly. I understand that China has a growing unemployment problem. Are you therefore going to examine problems in your economic planning, or will you borrow from North American sociology to find out what is psychologically wrong with all those unemployed people?

Second problem: class analysis. When it comes to doing class analyses, mainstream North American sociologists are like skilled basketball players. When you reach for the ball they switch it to the other hand so you can never get at it. They say class is not just ownership of or relationship to the means of production (the Marxist definition) but that you must look at in-

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come, status, and prestige. They say that a priest, for example, has low income but high prestige so can't be fitted into a simple class. Similarly a clerk may earn less than a manual laborer, but considers him- or herself superior; and a small capitalist shopkeeper may earn less than a skilled worker. They sometimes argue that if people don't believe in class, perhaps it doesn't exist, and show you surveys where 96 percent of Americans, when asked if they are upper, middle, or lower class, answer "middle class." The more I study this sociology, the more it becomes apparent that such sociologists are simply trying to obscure the nature and even the existence of classes in capitalist society. On the other hand, they imply that there will always be classes in any future society. They point to the Soviet Union and say that even though the party leaders don't "own" the industries, they control them and live much better than the common people. But is this problem—the problem of class in a post-revolutionary society—therefore one that North American sociologists can help solve for China? I doubt it, because they simply want to prove that class society is eternal and inescapable. I am told that Mao wrote about the emergence of a new ruling class after a socialist revolution, but his writings have not been followed up and thinking on the subject was forbidden by the Gang of Four—an example of the type of elite he warned about. There is some good European Marxist writing on the subject of the "new ruling class," but I think the problem is not merely theoretical. It is a problem that must be worked out in practice without persecuting to death. Similarly if there is still a fear of discussing this topic now in China several years after the fall of the Gang of Four, then no study of North American sociology will solve this censorship problem either. It is a political problem. Mainstream North American sociology treats class as only one thing among the many that affect people's behavior. They put it roughly equal with race, sex, nationality, religion, whether you do manual work or clerical work, your level of education, age, and so on. They see the Marxist concern with class as obsessive, and dogmatic, incapable of taking in all the complexities of modern life (and fit only for so-called totalitarian countries). They point to the fact that a lot of the present conflicts in the world are over race, sex, and nationality and don't seem to have much to do with class. In part they are right.

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But why are Marxists so concerned with class? It is because—unlike race, sex, or nationality—class is something that can be changed. You can get one of those horrible operations to Westernize the slant on your eyes and steal a foreign passport, but you will still remain Chinese underneath. To change your sex you have to go to Sweden for a complicated and expensive operation. So really we can't do much about getting rid of race, sex, and nationality problems by making everybody the same, even if we wanted to. But we can, through socialism, make everybody into workers and solve a major part of the conflicts in the world. So it is because Marxists want to change and better the world that they study classes so much. Mainstream North American sociologists have no such intention, no such purpose, so their class analysis wanders in idle academic speculation. There is one exception—their research methods are very good for marketing merchandise. With their computerized surveys they can, for example, tell you with astonishing accuracy what a black, middle-aged, urban, Protestant woman would like to buy her grandchildren for Christmas. Their computers can even type letters for a political campaign to get that same woman to vote for a certain politician. The computer will even sign the letter to make it look as if it were signed by hand. Incredible but true; this is the high point of North American sociology coupled to the high point of American technology. If China wants it, let me tell you what it could do here.

If China ever in the future ceased moving forward on its path to a classless society, a government elite could start propagating a Chinese vision of the aimless, wandering class analysis I have just described. Such an elite could guarantee its power and security by using the techniques of marketing and political manipulation developed by North American sociology and technology. A nightmare beyond belief? I don't think so. I am saying these things to warn you, not to scare you. My suggestions for your concern are very real and it is my international duty to present them as forcefully as possible.

* * *

What is the relationship between sociology and ethnology? A wit once said that sociology is for white people and

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anthropology is for everyone else. In fact this is historically almost correct. The boundaries have not always been easy to assess. An African anthropology student in England wanted to study the marriage habits of the British aristocracy and was almost expelled from the university for suggesting that one could do anthropology on the English. Generally sociology has been done in wealthy industrialized nations and anthropology in the Third World, especially among hunters, nomads, and simple peasants. Nowadays anybody studies what they want where they want—a friend just wrote an anthropology thesis on a food market in one of the biggest cities in Canada.

I think a legitimate scientific division might be possible here: anthropology for pre-class societies moving to become class societies and sociology for class societies. But it would require a clear idea of the movement of history, and this is lacking in North American sociology and anthropology. Instead North American mainstream social science does ethnology, treating every little group as basically outside of any historical tendency. It has virtually abandoned the idea of progress and historic evolution. This is because most North American theorists can see nothing beyond capitalism.

I have painted a bleak picture and sounded some warnings. But all is not lost. In the past decade there has been a renaissance, a virtual explosion, of Marxist theory precipitated by the rapid growth of the women's struggle, the national liberation movements (including the example of China in a very significant way), and the crisis of great unhappiness and meaninglessness in the wealthiest society in the world. This is a minority stream to be sure, unlike the mainstream I have been discussing, but it provides material that is exciting, vital, and necessary for China to read. One outstanding example is Harry Braverman's *Labor and Monopoly Capital: The Degradation of Work in the Twentieth Century*, mandatory reading for a country in rapid modernization, and Samir Amin's *Class and Nation: Historically and in the Current Crisis*, a brilliant study by an African economist of the capitalist world system and the place of socialist countries in it. This is future history. The mainstream product is past history. This is the best kind of gift North American social scientists can give to China, the best fruit of our experience. As to the mainstream of North American

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sociology, I think it is now only of historical interest. It has either abandoned serious issues, like the idea of progress, or has become utterly apologist for imperialism, as in its childish explanations of underdevelopment. You should study it in the same way you study Confucianism—the product of the ruling class of an earlier epoch—occasionally intellectually stimulating but always limited by its class interests. The vitality is elsewhere.

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THE EASTER REBELLION: DEFEAT OR VICTORY?

BY JOHN NEWSINGER

The participation of the working-class Irish Citizen Army in the 1916 Easter Rising in Dublin was criticized at the time by many socialists, who saw the insurrection as a foredoomed adventure, inspired by petty bourgeois nationalist aims and having nothing to do with the struggle for socialism. A few months after the event, Lenin wrote a sharp reply to one of these critics, Karl Radek, and forcefully defended James Connolly and his comrades against accusations of putschism. He wrote:

> The term "putsch," in its scientific sense, may be employed only when the attempt at insurrection has revealed nothing but a circle of conspirators or stupid maniacs, and has caused no sympathy among the masses. The centuries-old Irish national movement, having passed through various stages and combinations of class interest... manifested itself in street fighting, conducted by a section of the urban petty bourgeoisie and a section of the workers after a long period of agitation, demonstrations, suppressions of newspapers, etc. Whoever calls such a rebellion a "putsch" is either a hardened reactionary or a doctrinaire hopelessly incapable of envisaging a social revolution as a living phenomenon.[1]

This powerful endorsement by Lenin together with the solidarity that the memory of the Rising and of the subsequent executions inspire have together prevented an adequate assessment of the politics of the affair. Such an assessment is long overdue.

John Newsinger teaches at the Wreake Valley College in Leicestershire and is completing a book on Irish Republicanism, 1848-1923.

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I

James Connolly's prominence rests less on his theoretical and practical contribution to the struggle for socialism than on his participation in the Easter Rising and subsequent martyrdom. His execution by a British firing squad transformed him from a relatively minor figure in the European and American labor movements into the supposed embodiment of the Marxist understanding of the Irish struggle for national liberation. This transformation saw him assimilated into the pantheon of Irish republicanism as the representative of the working-class left wing, standing alongside Wolfe Tone, Thomas Addis Emmet, John Mitchel, Tom Clarke, and Padraic Pearse. An unfortunate consequence of this was that his powerful critique of republicanism was devalued, together with his forceful arguments for independent working-class socialist organization.

Connolly's claim to originality as a Marxist derives from his early assertion (1896) that the struggle for national liberation and the struggle for socialism were inseparable in Ireland, that Irish national liberation would only be finally realized with the overthrow of capitalist social relations. He believed that in the fight against British imperialism the middle-class elements in the nationalist camp would inevitably stop short of attacking the alien institution of private property, whereby British rule had been fastened on the country. In January 1897, he penned a prophetic warning for the Belfast republican journal, *Shan Van Vocht:*

> If you remove the English army tomorrow and hoist the green flag over Dublin Castle, unless you set about the organisation of the Socialist Republic your efforts will be in vain. England would still rule you. She would rule you through her capitalists, through her landlords, through her financiers, through the whole array of commercial and individualistic institutions she has planted in this country. . . . England would still rule you to your ruin, even while your lips offered hypocritical homage at the shrine of that Freedom whose cause you had betrayed. Nationalism without Socialism—without a reorganisation of society on the basis of a broader and more developed form of that common property which underlay the social structure of Ancient Erin—is only National Recreancy.[2]

This was a thunderbolt aimed not only at the Home Rulers, but more particularly at Irish republicans. It was a

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devastating critique of the limitations of their politics, addressed to them in a fraternal, but wholly uncompromising, fashion.

While Connolly was prepared to work with republicans on a wide range of issues, this was very much on his own terms. He considered their politics as outmoded and mistaken, altogether superseded by the rise of international socialism. He completely rejected the secret societies and military conspiracies that characterized Irish republicanism. In *Erin's Hope*, a collection of newspaper articles, first published together in the spring of 1897, he argued that revolution can only succeed when it has the "moral sanction" of the people and that hitherto no Irish revolutionaries had obtained this sanction before taking up arms. This failure to mobilize popular support had resulted in the disastrous risings of 1848 and 1867, and spoke "in trumpet tones in favor of such a remodeling of Irish revolutionary tactics as shall prevent a recurrence of similar disasters in future." What was required was the building of an uncompromising Republican Socialist Party which could call "into action on our side the entire sum of all the forces and factors of social and political discontent." At every election, this party would "afford a plebiscite of the people for or against the republic and would therefore be able to ascertain with mathematical accuracy the moment when the majority of Irish people were ripe for revolution." The individual member of the party would be confident in the knowledge that he was "not merely one of a numerically insignificant band of malcontents, but a citizen soldier fighting under orders publicly expressed in the face of all the world by a majority of his fellow-countrymen." In the face of such an alternative strategy, for republicans to continue "to counsel rebellion without first obtaining the moral sanction of the people would be an act of criminal folly which would only end in disaster." Such a revolutionary party as advocated by Connolly would "make Irish republicanism no longer the 'politics of despair' but the Science of Revolution."[3]

Connolly's rejection of republican putschism was complete and uncompromising. It is therefore somewhat paradoxical that in April 1916 he was to play a leading part in an insurrection that exhibited all the features of republican politics he had earlier condemned so vigorously in *Erin's Hope*.

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II

While Connolly's political understanding underwent considerable development in the years after 1897, profoundly influenced by his years in America, he nevertheless remained a convinced opponent of putschism and advocate of socialist politics, although now within the framework of a syndicalist strategy of social revolution. How, then, to account for his participation in the Easter Rising?

Under the cumulative impact of the defeat of the Irish Transport and General Workers Union in the 1913-14 lockout, of the Ulster crisis and the threat of partition, of the outbreak of the First World War and the abject failure of the European socialist movement to offer resistance, and of the apparent rallying of the overwhelming majority of the Irish people—including the working class—to the British cause in the war, his politics underwent a dramatic transformation. Whereas the emancipation of the Irish working class and the winning of freedom for Ireland had previously been inseparably linked in his thinking, they now came apart, with the emancipation of the workers receding into the future, while the striking of a blow for Ireland, taking advantage of British involvement in the War, loomed ever nearer. This development in his politics was made quite explicit in an article that he wrote at the beginning of 1916 where he made a crucial distinction between the struggle for socialism and the struggle for national liberation. "Our programme," he wrote, "in time of peace was to gather into Irish hands in Irish trade unions the control of all the forces of production and distribution in Ireland," but "in times of war we should act as in war. . . while the war lasts and Ireland still is a subject nation we shall continue to urge her to fight for her freedom. . . . [T]he time for Ireland's battle is Now."[4]

In July 1915 Connolly's Citizen Army and the republican Irish Volunteers jointly commemorated the recent death of the Fenian veteran of the 1860s, Jeremiah O'Donovon Rossa, whose body was returned from his American exile for burial. In a memorial article, Connolly wrote that the members of the Citizen Army were

> of the number who believe that at the call of duty they may have to lay down their lives for Ireland, and have so trained themselves that

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at the worst the laying down of their lives shall constitute the starting point of another glorious tradition—a tradition that will keep alive the soul of the Nation.[5]

This is the rhetoric of republicanism and has nothing in common with Connolly's lifetime advocacy of socialist politics. The Citizen Army was pledged to fight, not for socialism, but to keep alive the republican tradition represented by Rossa and thereby save the "soul of the Nation." It represents a complete break with his socialism.

Connolly believed that even the Irish working class had betrayed the cause of national liberation, had sold its soul and could only be redeemed by a blood sacrifice, by an armed insurrection. He gave expression to these sentiments in a crucial article, "The Ties that Bind" that appeared in the *Workers' Republic* on February 5, 1916:

Recently we have been pondering deeply over the ties that bind this country to England. It is not a new theme for our thoughts: for long years we have carried on propaganda in Ireland pointing out how the strings of self-interest bound the capitalist and landlord classes to the Empire, and how it thus became a waste of time to appeal to those classes in the name of Irish patriotism. We have said that the Working Class was the only class to whom the word "Empire" and the things of which it was the symbol did not appeal.... Therefore, from the intelligent working class could alone come the revolutionary impulse. Recently we have seen the spread of those ties of self-interest binding certain classes and individuals to the Empire—we have seen it spread to a near astonishing degree until its ramifications cover the island like the spread of a foul disease. It would be almost impossible to name a single class or section of the population not evilly affected by this social, political and moral leprosy.... It is with shame and sorrow we say it, but the evil influence upon large sections of the Irish Working Class of the bribes and promises of the enemy cannot be denied.... [D]eep in the heart of Ireland has sank the sense of the degradation wrought upon its people—our lost brothers and sisters—so deep and humiliating that no agency less potent than the red tide of war on Irish soil will ever be able to enable the Irish race to recover its self-respect, or establish its national dignity in the face of a world horrified and scandalised by what must seem to them our national apostasy. Without the slightest trace of irreverence but in all due humility and awe we recognise that of us, as of mankind before Calvary, it may truly be said: "Without the shedding of Blood, there is no Redemption."[6]

Connolly had abandoned "the Science of Revolution" for the

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very "politics of despair" he had earlier condemned. He was advocating a blood sacrifice in the same terms as Padraic Pearse, whose messianic republicanism was the driving force behind the Easter Rising.

III

The Easter Rising was the offspring of an alliance concluded between Connolly and the secret Military Council of the Irish Republican Brotherhood (IRB) in January 1916. At this time Connolly became a member of the IRB and was co-opted onto the Military Council as its sixth member. In this way, he finally surrendered himself to the embrace of the conspiratorial politics of Irish republicanism that he had so often attacked in the past.

The Irish Republican Brotherhood was the longest lasting republican secret society, having originally been founded in Dublin in 1858. It had been virtually moribund at the turn of the century, but was thereafter revived by the efforts of a number of young republicans: Denis McCullough, Bulmer Hobson, and Sean MacDermott, assisted by the veteran Fenian Tom Clarke, who returned from exile in America. At the time of the Rising, the Brotherhood still only had a membership of around 2,000, but had successfully placed many of them in commanding positions within the Irish Volunteers. Here, they constituted a shadow military command unknown to the official leadership of the Volunteers.

The Military Council intended to precipitate the Volunteers into an armed conflict with the British garrison in Dublin on 23 April, Easter Sunday 1916. Not only was this intention not known to the Volunteer command, but many leading members of the Brotherhood itself were also kept completely in the dark until the Rising was imminent. McCullough, the president of the Brotherhood's Supreme Council, was not a member of the Military Council and only discovered what was afoot a week before Easter. Other members of the Supreme Council were not informed until Good Friday or Easter Saturday. Hobson, a vocal opponent of precipitate action was actually kidnapped and held prisoner on the orders of the Military Council to prevent him from opposing their plans. This secrecy was later justified as necessary to keep the plans from British Intelligence,

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but another important consideration was the knowledge that many influential members of both the Brotherhood and the Volunteers would have opposed plans to stage an insurrection at this time had they only known of them. The Military Council had become, in Hobson's words, "a secret society within a secret society."[7]

The Military Council was gripped by the messianic belief that a blood sacrifice was necessary to safeguard the republican tradition from extinction, a belief that Connolly, as we have seen, had come to share. Mere military considerations were cast aside, because in this battle for the soul of the nation it was enough to take up arms and be prepared to lay down one's life without any regard to the possibility of success. There were others, however, who were not so inclined to disregard the relation of forces; they urged caution until popular feeling turned against the British and there was a real possibility of victory. The Military Council attempted to involve these people in the planned rising by means of a shabby deception.

Faked documents were manufactured showing that the British intended to suppress the Volunteers, and Eoin MacNeill, the Chief of Staff, was confronted with them. He ordered a mobilization for Easter Sunday when the conspirators intended to declare an Irish Republic. The conspiracy misfired when MacNeill discovered that he had been the victim of deception and issued orders canceling the mobilization. Rather than abandon their plans, the Military Council went ahead with the small forces they could muster a day late. On 24 April, Easter Monday, some 700 Volunteers and 120 members of the Citizen Army occupied the center of Dublin.

IV

The Easter Rising took place without any popular support whatsoever. Patrick O'Hegarty, a onetime member of the Brotherhood's Supreme Council, subsequently wrote of how

> [t]he insurrection came upon the people like a thunderbolt. They had not been expecting it, and they did not want it.... The insurrection was therefore universally and explosively unpopular. The populace fraternised with the British soldiery, gave them food and smiles.[8]

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Connolly certainly knew that he was leading his handful of men out to certain defeat. On the morning of Easter Monday he met William O'Brien, an ITGWU official at Liberty Hall, the union headquarters, and told him, "We are going out to be slaughtered." O'Brien asked, "Is there no chance of success?" and Connolly replied, "None whatever."[9] Frank Robbins. a rank-and-file member of the Citizen Army, in his recollections of the Rising describes how the insurgents were on a number of occasions attacked by civilian crowds and how, after the surrender when they were marched through the city under guard they were jeered and cursed by the Dublin populace.[10] The evidence is overwhelming and irrefutable. This was a putsch in every sense of the word.

When Lenin wrote in support of the Easter Rising, he had no reliable information and was mainly concerned with using it to demonstrate the importance for socialists of the principle of the right of nations to self-determination. The Rising was, in Lenin's own words, the work of "a circle of conspirators" who had "no sympathy among the masses" and although he did not at the time recognize this as the reality of the affair, it can no longer be seriously denied. Such affairs, as Marxists have long pointed out, end inevitably in tragedy, and the Easter Rising was no exception.

One can only register incredulity at the myopia of those who, like Oliver Snoddy and Stein Larsen, can still describe the rising as "a perfect picture of a socialist revolution in the way Lenin and Marx envisaged it in their writings."[11] In his "Letter to Comrades," Lenin wrote that

> military conspiracy is Blanquism if it is not organised by a party of a definite class. If its organisers have not analysed the political moment in general and the international situation in particular. If the party has not on its side the sympathy of the majority of the people as proved by objective facts. If the development of revolutionary events has not brought about a practical refutation of the conciliatory illusions of the petty bourgeoisie. If the majority of the Soviet-type organs of revolutionary struggle that have been recognised as authoritative or have shown themselves to be such in practice have not been won over. . . .[12]

Of course, Lenin was writing with the Russian situation in mind, but nevertheless, he does provide a useful set of criteria with which to consider the Irish situation. In Ireland in April

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1916 there was no proletarian party, only a republican secret society with some 2,000 members; the people were known to be opposed to a rising and still to support the Home Rulers; there were no Soviets of any description; the Rising had no significant support among the working class and it was not accompanied by any strikes or factory occupations; indeed the labor movement had not yet recovered from the 1913–14 defeat; and as for the revolutionary leadership having analyzed the political moment, they were, in fact, gripped by Pearse's conception of revolution as a blood sacrifice and altogether rejected any such consideration.

For Lenin, "if the revolutionary party has no majority in the advanced contingents of the revolutionary classes and in the country, insurrection is out of the question."[13] Once Connolly would have agreed wholeheartedly, but in April 1916 he was engaged in an undertaking that had nothing to do with the struggle for socialism.

Militarily, the Easter Rising was a total disaster. The handful of poorly armed insurgents suffered a crushing defeat that completely destroyed republican military forces for the time being. The leaders, including Connolly, were all executed, while the rank and file, together with hundreds of republican sympathizers, were interned.

From this defeat came an astonishing victory. The execution of the leaders had the effect of initiating a powerful turning of Irish public opinion against both the British and the Home Rulers. It was this shift in popular sympathy that was to provide the background against which the War of Independence was to be fought to at least a partially successful conclusion. But while the Easter Rising can be seen as having preserved the republican tradition from extinction and as triumphantly vindicating Pearse's doctrine of the blood sacrifice, for Connolly it also represented the abandonment of his lifelong efforts to establish an independent working-class Socialist Republican Party in Ireland.

The War of Independence took place within the clearly circumscribed limits of petty bourgeois republicanism. The guerrilla war was directed solely against the military and administrative machinery of British rule and scrupulously left untouched the economic chains that bound Irish society. Connolly

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was, at least in part, responsible for this. He had put aside his socialism (temporarily, I believe) in order to participate in the Easter Rising, and this was later used by others to justify their own abandonment of socialist politics altogether. The working class and the trade unions were actively enlisted in the War of Independence, but did not attempt to seriously transform the social content of the struggle. What was missing was Connolly's Marxist insight into the weaknesses and limitations of republicanism, his understanding of the need for the working class to lead the fight and combine the struggle for national liberation with the struggle for socialism. This died with him in 1916.

Thereafter Marxian socialism in Ireland was to be a subordinate left wing of republicanism rather than an independent working-class party. The end result was that Connolly's prophetic warning in the *Shan Van Vocht* all those years before was to be realized: "If you remove the English Army tomorrow and hoist the Green Flag over Dublin Castle, unless you set about the organisation of the Socialist Republic, your efforts will be in vain: England will still rule you." This was Connolly's tragedy.

NOTES

1. V.I. Lenin, *British Labour and British Imperialism* (London, 1969), p. 166.
2. *Shan Van Vocht*, January 1897.
3. James Connolly, *Selected Political Writings* (London, 1973), pp. 169-171.
4. *Workers Republic*, January 22, 1916.
5. *Rossa Souvenir*, July 1915.
6. *Workers Republic*, February 5, 1916.
7. Bulmer Hobson, *Ireland Yesterday and Tomorrow* (Tralee, 1968), p. 72.
8. P.S. O'Hegarty, *The Victory of Sinn Fein* (Dublin, 1924), pp. 3 4.
9. William O'Brien, "Introduction" in James Connolly, *Labour and Easter Week* (Dublin, 1949), p. 21.
10. Frank Robbins, *Under the Starry Plough* (Dublin, 1977), p. 128.
11. Oliver Snoddy and Stein Larsen, "1916 – A Workingmen's Revolution," *Social Studies* 2 (1973), p. 383.
12. A. Neuberg, *Armed Insurrection* (London, 1970), p. 43.
13. Marcel Liebman, *Leninism under Lenin* (London, 1975), p. 172.

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THESES ON THE CAPITALIST STATE

BY BERTELL OLLMAN

(1) One major aim of Marx's analysis of capitalism is to explain how people can make their own history and be made by it at the same time, how we are both free and conditioned, and how the future is both open and necessary.

(2) In Marx's theory of politics, the capitalist state is conceived of as a complex social relation of many different aspects, the main ones being political processes and institutions, the ruling class, an objective structure of political/economic functions, and an arena for class struggle.

(3) These aspects also offer ways into the study of the state as a whole (perspectives from which to view and piece together its constituent elements).

(4) Viewed from one aspect, or one side, the state appears as a one-sided relation—not partial (because in most cases the various parts are all represented) but one-sided (because the parts are structured in function of where one begins, which also affects the attention given to each one).

(5) The main interpretations of Marx's theory of the state—that it is an instrument of the capitalist class (Lenin and Ralph Miliband), an objective structure of political functions interlocked with capitalist economic functions (early Poulantzas), an arena of class struggle (late Poulantzas), the illusory community arising out of alienated social relations (early Ollman), and the hegemonic political ideology (Gramsci)—are such one-sided relations.

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(6) None of these interpretations denies the possibility that the institutions of the state at a particular time and place are in the hands of a faction or fragment of the capitalist class (or a coalition of such) who use them to promote their own special interests. Indeed, this is usually the case. Such inner-class political conflict constitutes the subject matter of most political science. The ways in which the state simultaneously represents the interests of the whole capitalist class in opposition to the working class, the former ruling class, other dominated classes, and fragments of the capitalist class itself (including the one which has temporarily come out on top in the inner-class conflict), on the other hand, constitutes the subject matter of a Marxist theory of politics.

(7) Each of these one-sided interpretations of the state (see no. 5) brings out something important about the capitalist state—about its appearance, structure, functioning (including contradictory functioning), ties to the rest of capitalism and potential for change—just as it hides and distorts much else. And in so far as each of these interpretations integrates politics with economic and social processes, they all carry us outside the boundaries of relevance drawn by orthodox political science.

(8) Some problems are better studied inside one rather than another of these interpretations. How the state protects the *status quo*, for example, is most usefully approached within the framework supplied by the view of the state as the instrument of the capitalist class. But it is the view of the state as a set of objective structures interlocked with capitalist economic processes that provides the most relevant framework in which to examine how the state contributes to the reproduction of capitalist conditions of existence. The requirements of tomorrow's capitalism and how they exert influence today emerge most clearly within this framework. The same political developments, when viewed inside these two different interpretations, will often exhibit a dual role: they defend existing capitalist relations while simultaneously laying down a necessary condition for what they are becoming.

(9) These different Marxist interpretations of the state are dependent to some degree (in when they are formulated, which ones get stressed, etc.) on the conditions and events in the lives of the people who hold them. Allowing for many exceptions, we

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can say in general that the structural view of the state (the state as a set of objective structures) is most popular in "quiet" periods; the Gramscian view of the state as the hegemonic political ideology, which stresses the capitalists' near perfect control over the workers' thinking, emerges in periods of political reaction; while the views of the state as the instrument of the ruling class and as an arena of class struggle come to the fore in periods of rapid social change.

(10) Some of the interpretations of the state mentioned seem to contradict one another. For example, the view of the state as an instrument of the capitalist class (which suggests that the capitalists are in direct control of the state and consciously use its institutions to promote their interests) appears to contradict the view of the state as a set of objective structures tied to capitalist economic processes whose requirements it must satisfy (which suggests that the actions of whichever group controls the state are determined by forces outside its control, given that it does not want to overturn the entire capitalist system).

(11) These apparently contradictory views of the state are equally true—if not equally important (this is determined by research)—representing as they do different tendencies inside the state relation. Dialectical truth does not fit together like the pieces of a puzzle, but allows for the kind of multiple one-sidedness and apparent contradictoriness that results from studying any subject from perspectives associated with its different aspects. (Perhaps the best known example of this phenomenon in Marxism is the claim that capitalists are an "embodiment of capital" which stands in apparent contradiction to the claim that capital functions as it does because it is in the control of capitalists who use it to further their profit-maximizing interests.)

(12) Particular political developments may also have apparently contradictory meanings when viewed within different Marxist interpretations of the state. For example, a political reform that favors the working class, when viewed within the framework of the capitalist state as an arena of class struggle, appears as a victory for the workers, perhaps one which helps set limits to the exercise of capitalist power. On the other hand, viewing the same reform within the framework of the state as the instrument of the capitalist class leads to the conclusion that

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the capitalists have adopted a more sophisticated way of controlling or cooling out the workers, that it is a higher order victory for the capitalists. These different conclusions do not balance out, and a compromise makes no sense. Rather, both conclusions are true, depending as they do on the interpretation of the state in which the event in question is placed.

(13) As regards the future, the apparently contradictory versions of the present which emerge from analyzing the same event within different interpretations of the state indicate the variety of real possibilities which make up the future. In the case of a political reform which seems to favor the workers, it could strengthen their hand in the class struggle; it could also—in quite different ways—weaken them. These alternative futures are part of the present; they don't begin tomorrow. It is only by studying present political developments within different interpretations of the state that we can capture the full potential for change, and change in different directions, which constitutes an essential part of the present moment—and maximize our chances for influencing them.

(14) The widespread debate among Marxists over the relative autonomy of the state usually goes on at cross purposes because the people involved do not sufficiently distinguish between these different Marxist interpretations of the state, and hence whether (under certain circumstances) the state is relatively autonomous from the ruling capitalist class, or from the economic requirements of capitalism, or from other alienated social relations, etc. As a matter of fact, there is a case to be made for relative autonomy within each of these perspectives on the state. What is important is to avoid the confusion that results from thinking there is only one debate when there are really several.

(15) Note for further research. The model for constructing the relations between the different views of the state arising out of approaches rooted in its different aspects is the complex set of "identities" Marx uncovers between production, distribution, exchange, and consumption in his unfinished Introduction to the *Grundrisse*.

(16) These complementary yet quite distinct Marxist views of the state have somewhat different consequences for the development of political consciousness and revolutionary will. For

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most people, their eyes are first opened politically when they grasp the state as an instrument of the ruling class; the society-wide dimensions of the problem only come into view when the state is also grasped as an objective structure tied in with capitalist economic structures. Their understanding is deepened—and the problems of organizing against capitalism better appreciated—when they also see the state as the illusory community and the hegemonic political ideology. But only when/if the state is also grasped as an arena of class struggle does Marxism become not only a way of understanding the world but a means for changing it through political activity.

(17) The narrow focus that political science imposes on the study of politics (whether in American Government, Comparative Government, International Relations, or Public Administration), especially when combined with its ahistorical approach, radically falsifies both the degree of freedom and the degree of necessity that characterizes our political lives. In the absence of any inquiry into the state as an instrument of the capitalist class, political science seriously exaggerates the citizen's freedom to use the state to achieve his/her ends. Ignoring the state's character as an objective set of political structures tied in with capitalist economic processes, political science also underestimates the objective constraints under which any party in power acts, given a desire to retain even some capitalist relations (the classic dilemma of social democracy). However, should such a party decide to do away with capitalism entirely, the same view of the state accords to people greater freedom of action than most political scientists think they have (or could have). Likewise, on the level of individual effectiveness, viewing the state as an arena of class struggle means that people actually have more freedom to determine their lives (because it is only through class struggle that major change occurs) than they do in more traditional political-science views of the state which exalt the role of personal freedom while denying or ignoring class struggle.

(18) The interpretations of the state which contribute most to the development of revolutionary will are those which give a prominent place to the capitalist class, which is to say the view of the state as an instrument or ruling committee of this class and the view of the state as an arena of class struggle. To

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build up a full head of steam in and for the struggle, to maximize rational hostility as a politically motivating factor, most people require opponents in human form, other people who embody the oppressive functions of the system. It is as hard to hate abstract enemies as it is to love abstract friends. It is true that an analysis of the state as a set of objective structures (and, to a lesser extent, as the illusory community) is necessary to fully grasp the origins of existing oppression, how it works and for whom, the weak points in the armor of oppression, who are one's potential allies, and even how the oppressors themselves may be suffering from the system that carries their name. But it is also true that only by directing the struggle against actual, living capitalists can people be sufficiently motivated to engage in revolutionary struggle. To ignore the structural dimension of the analysis is to increase the danger that revolutionary politics will degenerate into reformism, directed toward removing the worst politicians. Without the class dimension, the danger is that revolutionary politics—lacking "fire in the belly"—will degenerate into scholasticism.

(19) By studying the state from the perspectives associated with its different aspects, Marxism is able to show how in politics people make their own history and are made by it at the same time, how we are both free and conditioned, and how the future is both open and necessary.

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BOOKS

THE HEART OF THE MATTER

By Doug Dowd

Corporate Control, Corporate Power, by Edward S. Herman. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981; 336 pp., $18.95; paper $9.95.

In the main, social scientists are neither scientific nor much concerned with society; among that sorry lot, economists take the cake. As Thorstein Veblen put it over seventy years ago, "their intellectual horizon is bounded by the same limits of commonplace insight and preconceptions as are the prevailing opinions of the conservative middle class." (*The Higher Learning in America*, p. 136)

Bad as such matters were in Veblen's day, they have since become considerably worse, both in degree and kind. Economists now make up a small army that has what Veblen called a "trained incapacity" to understand society, or even to know that there is a society to be understood—"society" being the processes and relations of social existence which have been buried by economists in a grave marked "Other Things Being Equal," at the foot of which plastic flowers are placed on solemn occasions.

The five-star generals of the Army of Economists are the self-styled "theorists." They see to it that graduate students will not take the first step, let alone complete the journey to the PhD, unless and until (1) they have learned to think *only* about those matters that (presumably) can be mathematized, while (2) postponing indefinitely those social concerns that initially attract so many to the study of economics. Quite apart from other influences, these rigorous requirements generally suffice to discourage those who might wish to learn about the economy—as distinct from economics—and its dynamic connections with the rest of life, past, present, and future.

Doug Dowd teaches economics at California State University, San Jose, and is the author of *The Twisted Dream: Capitalist Development in the U.S. since 1776*.

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At a lower level of this General Staff of Economics are those economists (and their allies from political science, sociology, etc.) who pick up fat paychecks for corporate and government work, here, there, and elsewhere. Only the most notorious of these are "*los* Chicago boys," the disciples of free-market Führer Milton Friedman who guide the fascist economic policies of fascist Chile. Between the stools of aloof theoretical elegance, on the one hand, and pimping for the greedy and the tyrannical, on the other, squats the rest of the profession—dithering, making molehills out of mountains, and driving students crazy.

One of the larger mountains that has been fragmented and reduced to a collection of disputations raising poor questions and finding worse answers is that which concerns business power in the United States, the hard core of power with which all else has come to terms. That power, thank goodness, is the focus of Edward Herman's important book in which he has done much to bring this vital realm of fact and analysis back to life.

With *Corporate Control, Corporate Power* Ed Herman once more sets himself above and beyond his profession, as he did so well recently with Noam Chomsky in their two-volume *Political Economy of Human Rights* (South End Press). In his thirty years or so of university teaching (mostly at the University of Pennsylvania's prestigious Wharton School of Finance), Herman has been concerned mainly with the structures and processes of the banking world, on which he is an authority. But alongside his numerous essays and books of that sort he has done substantial research and writing on the high crimes of the United States over the globe and the lower crimes of the economics profession. Nor has he failed to note the absurdities that have been associated with those tragedies—always in a restrained manner, with a wry touch.

Several of these strands of Herman's work come together in this book. It is academically impeccable in its factual solidity and its analytical grasp, yet it stands as a full-scale assault on the role(s) of big business in the United States. Its many pages of footnotes and bibliography are arranged so as not to disturb the reader's flow, and they constitute a major assist to those who wish to push more deeply into these particular jungles.

The book's title aptly summarizes its two emphases, control and power. A sharp distinction between control and power neither can nor should be made, but the differences between them are important. As Herman uses terms, the question of control is a matter largely of *who* controls (and how), while that of power is a matter of *what* is controlled. The first half of the book deals mainly with a survey of arguments and distinctions concerning control, with Herman's

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analytic concept of "strategic position," with the facts and history of control of the large corporation, and, finally and at length, with the intermittently raised question of whether, to what degree, and in what ways financial institutions control nonfinancial corporations. These chapters are important reading for everyone but they are *must* reading for economists—whose emanations have for most of a century refilled the Augean stables.

The way in which Herman puts all this in order is masterful, and not least because it is done so efficiently. With characteristic dryness and understatement, he states in his Preface: "In a sense, this book is a reappraisal of the postulate of a 'managerial revolution,' with a more explicit concern than appears in much of the earlier writing on the subject with the forces that shape and limit managerial discretion." (p. xiv) The groundwork for that "postulate" was laid by Berle and Means in their 1932 classic *The Modern Corporation and Private Property*; its name was given to it by James Burnham's book *The Managerial Revolution* (1941). Between those books and in the decades since the Second World War, arguments over the control of the giant corporation have multiplied both in number and type, and they have come from all over the political and ideological spectrum. Not a few of them have come from regular contributors to MR, including Paul Sweezy, Jim O'Connor, and Herman himself. The controversy on this question on the left was ignited, or re-ignited, in 1970 in *Socialist Revolution* (now *Socialist Review*) by Bob Fitch and Mary Oppenheimer. They asked "Who Rules the Corporations?" Whatever its other merits, O'Connor's reply won the prize for brevity, if only in title: "The Ruling Class."

The issues revolving around the notion of a "managerial control" are several and muddied, and they have been from Berle and Means onward. That the giant corporation has great numbers of stockholders—almost all of whom are both ignorant of, and basically indifferent to, what the company does—has also raised the possibility and the actuality that a minority interest, or even a management with no ownership interest at all, should find ways to control the giant company. How frequently have such possibilities become realities? What difference does it make? To whom? And, because of the growing role of financial institutions both as short- and long-term creditors of nonfinancial companies, may not the former control the latter? With what consequences for what and for whom?

Many of the commentators and analysts of these questions have evidently assumed that stockholder control would be more benign than managerial control, or vice versa; while in the case of J. K. Galbraith, whose emphasis is on modern technology more than

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modern finance, the scenario was created (by him, not by the reality) of a "technological estate" gaining power from both owners and managers.

When those who argue through these (and other) questions come close to earth, they usually do so believing that one group is more likely than another to seek profits rather than growth—or the opposite, with variations. On top of which, a whole school of even more vulgar ideologists has grown along with the giant corporation to assert that with size comes social responsibility, sometimes with the notion that it is good for profits in the long run, sometimes believing that corporations pursue a mission with a life of its own. These same people would be unlikely to believe that as a tiger grows larger it also becomes less dangerous; but then ideology plays a much smaller role in our beliefs about animals.

Herman has studied all these questions, has placed them up against fact and logic, and arrives quietly and firmly at his conclusions: of course managers control the giant corporation, by and large; of course financial institutions have the power in many (and an increasing number of) cases to control nonfinancial corporations to some important degree; but also, of course, the managers of nonfinancial corporations and the financial corporations with the strategic position to exert control are almost without exception agreed that the role of *all* corporations is to achieve profits *and* growth, growth *and* profits. Nor does Herman find any nook or cranny in which corporate social responsibility dwells.

Herman's own words in his concluding note on financial control well represent the quiet authority of his reasoning:

> Financial power in the 1970s appears to constitute a strongly conservative force, accommodating and serving the dominant non-financial elements in the community. It does not dominate the large corporation, but what influence it has tends to press for actions that will enhance creditworthiness and profit growth. (p. 161)

It may be added, in the 1980s, that the financial institutions, for whatever reasons, have been doing a poor job of enhancing either creditworthiness or profit growth, as bankruptcies soar and profits fall. That such is the case is in part (only in part) due to the effective power of the financial sector in the shaping of governmental policies. Increasingly since the buoyant 1960s, financial institutions (and the financial officers of nonfinancial corporations here and abroad) have acted as though there is no tomorrow, as though there is a long-run

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economic free lunch. In the process they have created a financial house of cards, what another astute financial economist, Hyman Minsky (of Washington University in St. Louis), calls "financial fragility"—the outcome of a process that "transforms doing well into a speculative investment boom." Keynes once referred to the stock market as a gambling casino. Since the 1960s the entire capitalist economy has become a gambling casino, loaded dice and all—now presided over by an administration that is unconscionably pro-business but blind to the current needs of capitalism as a system.

Be that as it may, in whatever ways corporations are controlled, if they are to gain profits or power or both they also need power in markets and power in society, not least in the governmental arena. The second half of Herman's book concerns itself with these matters.

Business power may be thought of as taking two main forms: concentration and centralization. Like other terms, these are used variously. For our purposes, concentration refers to the power of a company in its own product markets, where it buys and sells; centralization refers to power that goes beyond particular product markets and usually beyond economic power into the realms of political and social influence. The two forms of power overlap, of course, in origin and in function: as the former has grown, so has the latter. The merger waves of the 1960s and 1970s increased both; the manic quality of mergers in the 1980s takes us still further, reducing an already tight pattern of business control and power to yet more ominous proportions.

The proportions were pretty ominous already in the mid-1970s, the years for which Herman's data are representative. A couple of summary statements tell the tale:

- About two percent of all *manufacturing* corporations had assets over $250 million, and they owned 72.5 percent of all such assets. Roughly the same percentages apply for corporations in finance and in mining.
- Fewer than 2,000 corporations had assets over $250 million, and they owned about two-thirds of all the assets of *all* corporations of the entire U.S. economy. They constituted less than one percent of all corporations. (p. 189)

One doesn't need to be an expert to infer from such facts (and more of the same) that whatever is going on in this economy, it is not the rule of a "free market." The market competition hoped for by Adam Smith—price competition and quality competition—his "invisible hand" that would transform individual greed into social well-being, exists only among the weak firms, essentially at the retail

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level. (That, plus increasingly effective foreign competition that cannot be stopped so long as the United States seeks to rule over a global capitalist empire.) The giants engage in a form of competition which is better termed "rivalry." And their rivalry utilizes "non-price" competitive tactics, which raise costs and prices, but seldom quality. The advertising and packaging industries are the most visible signs of these processes. Ever-increasing prices for the same or less is the leading characteristic of monopoly pricing; it is also a major contributor to inflation, but you'd never know it listening to economists.

The great market power of business enables it to inflict its wounds on one and all, including, it appears, itself. Its great political power allows business to shape what government is, what it does and does not do; these days it seems clear that what business has wanted is not good for it or anyone else.

Herman is excellent and succinct in his discussion of the relationships between government and business power, as the following quotations will suggest.

> The primacy of corporate initiatives [in economic change] derives in large part from the successful preservation of corporate autonomy, corporate dominance over basic economic activities, and weak government. By weak, I do not mean incapable of maintaining internal order, lacking in military power, or even inability to exercise commanding authority against the will of business in specific cases—I mean unable to plan and implement effectively some coherent and rational vision of domestic economic and social policy. . . . [D]espite the increase in size of government in the United States, the government has been confined to support functions and excluded from participation in primary economic activities. This role limitation helps make government a hostage to the business community. [It is] government that does not control or initiate, but one that reacts and follows. (p. 295)

Or, as Veblen put it in his *Theory of Business Enterprise* (1904): "Representative government means, chiefly, representation of business interests."

This review began and ends with quotations from Thorstein Veblen. He was the most astute critic of U.S. capitalism and its shaping role over the state, education, the media, and almost everything else. He was the first to see the onset of U.S. monopoly capitalism and what it might mean, and to see that the chronic tendencies of the system were toward monopolization, stagnation, and what he called "a strenuous foreign policy." Herman has read Veblen (among many others) carefully and uses his works frequently.

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Like Veblen, he is gloomy. After concluding with a grim look at the future, Herman adds that "a bleaker forecast is plausible." (p. 301)

Writing just as the First World War was to begin, Veblen saw the crisis of the twentieth century in his own bleak terms:

> [H]istory records more frequent and more spectacular instances of the triumph of imbecile institutions over life and culture than of peoples who have by force of instinctive insight saved themselves alive out of a desperately precarious institutional situation, such, for instance, as now faces the people of Christendom. (*Instinct of Workmanship*, p. 25)

With Ronald Reagan snoozing and grinning in the Oval Office while his favorite Calvin Coolidge gazes benignly down on him, we must contemplate the meaning of having imbecile institutions presided over by imbeciles. Our work is cut out for us.

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WESTERN MARXISM

By Joel Kovel

Dialectic of Defeat: Contours of Western Marxism by Russell Jacoby. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1981. 202 pp., $19.95.

There have been innumerable varieties of Marxism, and still more studies of the distinctions between them. Few people, however, have been willing to understand the differences between Marxisms as a function of how they have played the historical game of power; and fewer still have, like Russell Jacoby, the commitment and erudition to relate the history of the Marxisms to their philosophical elaboration. What Jacoby has found confirms the adage well, if brutally, enunciated by Leo Durocher some years ago: Nice guys finish last. Since what is at stake is no sport but the future of civilization, his interpretation makes grim but essential reading.

No one could be better suited for this project than Jacoby, author of the widely respected assault on bourgeois psychologism *Social Amnesia.* Jacoby is an independent scholar in the full sense of the term. Indigestible by the academic system, he is familiar with the repulsion between truth and established power. In the earlier work his sharp eye for contradiction was trained on the "overwhelming subjectivism" of post-Freudian psychology "in a situation where the social noose is invisible and the gasps of the individual are recorded as cries of liberation." Now the contradiction is from the other side, and much more historically momentous: that of a victorious Marxism, whose noose has not been at all invisible, and of a defeated one that "has not obliterated the individual or the subject." (p. 9)

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The idea that a revolutionary ethos has been contaminated by the hated practices of the system it wishes to overthrow is not likely to be easily accepted. But there is no evading what has happened. The achievement of power, whether it be state power or the building of a mass party, can bring corruption in its wake; while the power itself can provide the means to conceal this fact. "Few boldly maintain the identity of success and truth; few resist its spell. Success confirms the truth of the theory; defeat is its own verdict." And yet, "little has eviscerated Marxism more than the judgment of history as truth itself." (p. 3)

Of course, this realization cannot simply be turned around. Virtue is not inherent in defeat. Yet defeat is only a "fact; it registers the constellation of forces, not the quality of insight, theory, and even practices. These must be elicited from the web of events; they are not simply contiguous with the defeat itself." (p. 4) And in this "web of events," one pattern stands out according to Jacoby: the defeat of certain strands of Marxism has not been so much at the hands of capitalism as by other Marxisms. The great theme of *Dialectic of Defeat* is fratricide.

Cain for Jacoby is Soviet Marxism, and the various aliases under which it has paraded. (Jacoby will also refer to this type as conformist, or orthodox Marxism.) At the level of theory, Soviet Marxism or Leninism becomes identified as "scientific," by which Jacoby means the employing of an authority drawn from the positive sciences of nature to justify political action. Arrayed against this juggernaut are several Abels, drawn together under the rubric of "Western Marxism." It is Jacoby's purpose to champion them and to reaffirm their central theoretical identity, which is that of "philosophy" (as opposed to science), in particular the philosophy of Hegel. Thus the historical struggles between socialism and capitalism and within the socialist camp itself are reflected in the ideological struggles *within* socialism between a philosophical and a scientific (or to be more exact, a *scientistic*) interpretation of Marxism. If the latter point of view has tended to triumph, according to Jacoby, it is because scientism is a recycling of capitalism, and not its transcendence. Thus "scientific Marxism" is merely progress in capitalism instead of being a revolutionary advance. "Here Marxism is infatuated with the bourgeois society it despises. If Marxists wanted to expropriate the expropriators, they also fell in love with their instruments: science and technology." (p. 5)

Who have been the "Western Marxists"? No school, to be sure, but rather a tendency that continually surfaces, sometimes in "schools" (as in that of Frankfurt), sometimes in left parties or factions within parties, sometimes in isolated individual scholars—and is just

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as regularly submerged, often forcefully, and sometimes bloodily, as in the cases of Rosa Luxemburg and Antonio Gramsci. With loving scholarship, Jacoby presents the great sweep of Western Marxism and the brilliant range of those who bore its message. He draws attention not only to the luminaries—to Luxemburg, Gramsci, Korsch, (the young) Lukacs, Horkheimer, Adorno, Marcuse, Merleau-Ponty, and Sartre—but equally to the lesser known exponents—to Labriola, Pannekoek, Gorter, and Levi—and even to those who are relatively unknown, for example, Charles Andler and Rodolfo Mondolfo. Regrettably, Jacoby devotes no attention to Marxism in the Third World, and little to the spread of Western Marxism to this hemisphere, although it should be noted that he singles out Paul Baran as its transmitter from the Frankfurt School to Paul Sweezy.

It is, of course, immensely difficult to draw a common principle from the lives of so many widely spread and fractious characters who seem united only by their marginality and strength of character. Yet the thread which binds the Western Marxists together emerges with surprising consistency, as a twofold conception of Marxism: from the side of the proletariat, an emphasis on spontaneity, voluntarism, and the inner, subjective life; and from the side of the party, a relentless attack on bureaucratic and authoritarian tendencies. Thus:

> The Western Marxists responded by retrieving from Marxism the processes of class consciousness and proletarian subjectivity. Their accent on process resulted from their conviction that class consciousness was not a thing to be commanded or divulged but attained by the class itself. Herein dwelled the democratic ethos of Western Marxism. The network of bourgeois culture and passivity could not be undone by superior discipline or directives; these remained locked within its terms regardless of the purity and dedication of the party and its members. Rather, bourgeois hegemony could be contested only by engaging the whole of the proletariat, its hearts and minds. When class consciousness and proletarian subjectively fused, the landscape of capitalism would light up. (p. 62)

The opposing tendency within Marxism which so regularly vanquished the Western ethos stemmed from the Soviet model but should not be confused with it. The trouble lay less with Soviet Marxism proper—which was determined, after all, by unique Russian conditions—than with its export westward and its hold over societies where more room for a liberatory direction existed by virtue of a highly developed bourgeois-democratic tradition. Although Lenin in particular is not spared in these pages for his machinations against the left tendencies within European Marxism, the real problem, as Jacoby recognizes, lies within the West itself.

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Both the virtue and the villainy of Marxist practices have been responsive to particular elements of the bourgeois world-view. The virtue, epitomized by Western Marxism, is heir to the bourgeois dream of freedom, which it tries to universalize through the overcoming of economic domination. The villainy, meanwhile, succumbs to the logic of productionism and raw power, which it tries to rationalize through the mystique of science. In this light, the success of scientistic or orthodox Marxism over the Western variety is no more surprising than the dominance of scientism over spontaneity in bourgeois life itself. After all, we have always known that spontaneity and desire have to be subordinated to the iron logic of production and control in capitalist culture. Marxism in this respect is no more than a shadow of capitalism.

Ultimately, Western Marxism stands for Marxism without authoritarianism. It is the Marxism of freedom, and surely the way most adherents would like to think of themselves as Marxists. Yet it has also been, sadly, the Marxism of illusion. Set against the brutal realities of the historical world, Marxist movements have simply become obliterated unless, in taking power, they also secured the means of organized force and violence. The examples in *Dialectic of Defeat* are convincing enough, but we need not go back so far to see socialist movements wiped out because they stayed democratic. Consider Allende's Chile. Or what is happening in Nicaragua as the regime toughens itself to face the CIA and destabilization.

It is a terrible error to pretend that these things do not happen to Marxism or to dignify them with the authority of science. Science in this sense simply means freezing the moral dimension out of human action by investing it with the inevitability of nature. To the extent that Marxist movements conceal their own, very human, choices behind the facade of scientism, they are only tending to perpetuate authoritarianism. Jacoby's courage and intellectual power in setting himself against the massive weight of this tradition are to be greatly admired.

The real argument of *Dialectic of Defeat* is that the essence of Marxism is moral and political. This does not detract from the immense contribution made by Marx to the demystification of bourgeois ideology, nor does it deny the tremendous advances made in the objective understanding of society. It only claims that this knowledge—which is scientific in the best sense of the term—is the servant and not the master of a project of human liberation.

To the extent that he demystifies the corruption of science in the service of domination, Jacoby is masterful. However, the reader of *Dialectic of Defeat* will soon enough get the idea that its critique of science, in fact, extends much further. Here trouble sets in.

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Antagonism to science begins to sound like a shibboleth qualifying one for inclusion in the virtuous left. With remarks like "the gun of science is cocked whenever thought thinks too much," (p. 35) there doesn't seem to be much hope for anybody who clings to any interest, much less conviction, in the tradition of science. And yet there have been many adamant fighters for freedom within the socialist tradition who have, so to speak, considered science and not Hegel to be their main philosophical orientation.

Even the discussion of Hegelianism itself becomes affected by Jacoby's rigid attitude toward science. After we learn that "the irreplaceable starting and returning points for surpassing conformist Marxism are found in Hegel" (where does this leave William Morris, Wilhelm Reich, or the Marxist theologists?), Jacoby goes on to say that "diverse schools of Marxism have appealed to Hegel"—including, to be sure, some of the oppressive ones. This exception, however, is one of those that proves the rule, for it turns out that there are two kinds of Hegelian traditions:

> the "historical" and the "scientific" Hegel. Each prized different texts and opposite formulations from the *oeuvre* of Hegel. The historical Hegelians gravitated toward the Hegel of history, subjectivity, and consciousness; their preferred text was *The Phenomenology of Mind*. . . . The scientific Hegelians valued Hegel as the comprehensive and scientific philosopher; they elevated the total system, the laws of development and the formality of the dialectic. They preferred the *Science of Logic*. (p. 38)

Needless to add, Jacoby associates the scientific Hegelians with the pernicious traits in Marxism, and the historical ones with Western Marxism. But if this is so, how does one account for the resolutely humanistic Marxism of, for example, Raya Dunayevskaya, who is not mentioned in the text, yet whose thought—a virtually pure culture of Western Marxism— is comprehensively grounded in Hegel's *Science of Logic*? (Cf. *Philosophy and Revolution* [New York, Delacorte Press, 1973].)

Ultimately, Jacoby's critique of science fails because he shares a nuclear assumption with the repressive vision of science he attacks. This appears at the end of his study, in an all-too-brief chapter where he takes up the substantive questions raised by the repeated failure of Western Marxism. The problem is to explain the existence of "class-unconsciousness," i.e., the inability to translate economic reality into proletarian militancy in late capitalist society. By clinging to its original categories of explanation for this phenomenon, Marxism only deludes itself: "The myth that the proletariat is only biding its

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time, that despite all appearances it is revolutionary at heart and mind, has drugged Marxists for too long." (p. 125) The problem as Jacoby sees it is really that "acceptance and political withdrawal may not only be encouraged and commanded, but also inbred. . . ." And once inbred, they become "second-nature." In other words, as refractory to political mediation as a biological instinct would be.

The concept of second nature goes back to Democritus, but did not become important to Western thinkers again until reintroduced by Lukacs and, later, further developed by the Frankfurt School. Second nature "is not biology but history that congealed into nature; it congealed because it was imprisoned in the dungeons of repetition. Second nature signified the dialectic of history, which was not a dialectic but a dynamic of ineluctable cycles." However, "history was and was not natural. It was historical because it was made by men and women who consciously and freely controlled their actions. It was natural because it was still enacted unconsciously; it still participated in recurring cycles of suffering that were intrinsic to nature but extrinsic to history." (p. 119) Second nature is contrasted to another concept developed by Lukacs, reification, which is also a way of describing history that has become frozen and is awaiting the thaw of proletarian revolution. Reification, however, remains on the plane of history; it does not descend into the relatively more impenetrable domain of nature, and so is a more optimistic concept. For Jacoby, "too many cemeteries" lie between 1923, when Lukacs published *History and Class Consciousness*, and the present. The grimmer concept, second nature, must be invoked, which

> recorded the defeats and the doubts; it testified to an unfreedom that preceded, and perhaps survived, capitalism. Nor did second nature, like reification, infer the immanence of class-consciousness. In an abridged formulation, reification was the unconsciousness specific to capitalism, or reification was the capitalist form of second nature. Second nature was the form of unconsciousness of an unliberated humanity. (p. 120)

It is the framework within which the defeats of Western Marxism become intelligible.

This somber theoretical outcome, shared with the later, embittered reflections of the Frankfurt School, rests on a metaphysical assumption about nature which must itself be examined. Briefly put, second nature must share the properties of "first" nature—and first nature must itself be alien to humankind—if our descent into it is to bode so ill for the future. In other words, we must be essentially—and inescapably—estranged from nature. This

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is a view ultimately akin to Freud's, who accepted the primacy of a split between civilization and nature, which latter he saw as our instinctual side. Jacoby accepts the implication, even though he does not follow Freud's path to it. He goes further yet to claim that

> [all of the] Western Marxists, especially the theorists of the Frankfurt School, adopted a negative vision of nature. This vision is not to be confused with the classic ethos of entrepreneurial capitalism which eyed nature only as stuff to be exploited and subdued. Rather nature, even before and outside of human exploitation, was wracked by violence and pain. Nature mutely testified to ceaseless horror, perpetual cycles of silent suffering. . .(whereas) history harbored a hope to escape from the eternal repetition of nature and even, in its most utopian formulations, to liberate nature. (p. 118)

This may not be exactly the view of capitalist predation, but it is not as far from it as Jacoby would want to believe. In fact, it reads something like the interpretation given by the English settlers in America as the justification for their need to "subdue" nature, a practice which gave them the right to expropriate it from the Indians, who merely lived in harmony with the land. Psychologically speaking, such a notion amounts to a projection of the categories of historical domination—violence, suffering, etc.—into the natural world: a quite anthropocentric and, indeed, Eurocentric view, in fact, Cartesian at the core; which is to say, philosophically identical with the very scientism Jacoby deplores in orthodox Marxism. Could it be that this attitude constitutes the common flaw in Western Marxism as well?

We cannot take up the question here. However, it can be said that whatever else became of Marx and Marxism, the young Marx in 1844 established the basis for a reconciliative rather than a dominative, or Cartesian, attitude toward nature, when he stated in the *Manuscripts* that we were a part of nature. It is compelling that such an attitude will have to be integral to the next stage of "Western Marxism." For it has become clear that capitalism has, perhaps in order to stave off internal collapse and proletarian revolt, shifted the terms of its struggle to nature and that this shift threatens the world ever more urgently with the twin disasters of ecocide and nuclear holocaust. Given Jacoby's attitude, science must be avoided phobically, as though it were inherently a Faustian pact with the devil. But this will not do. Unless a radically rethought attitude toward nature and science becomes part of Marxism, it is not simply dooming itself to frustration once again, but is also fostering the suicide of the human race.

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Jacoby has written an elegy for lost possibilities within Marxism. His message must not be forgotten; but it must not be lost to the current struggle either. Otherwise the sacrifices of the Western Marxists will indeed have been for naught.

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A. Total no. copies printed	11,083	12,000
B. Paid in circulation;		
1. Sales through dealers and carriers, street vendors and counter sales	1,494	1,554
2. Mail subscriptions	7,736	8,243
C. Total paid circulation	9,230	9,797
D. Free distribution (including samples) by mail, carrier or other means	180	207
E. Total distribution (sum of C and D)	9,410	10,004
F. 1. Office use, left-over, unaccounted, spoiled after printing	1,275	1,726
2. Returns from news agents	398	270
G. Total (sum of E and F—should equal net press run shown in A)	11,083	12,000

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(continued from inside front cover)

Don't be fooled. They are talking about peanuts, and the wrong kind of peanuts too. Keep in mind that there are now many more than 11 million unemployed when you read that the Republicans are talking about creating 200,000 jobs. The Democrats, it seems, are thinking bigger – up to 500,000 or 600,000. Six hundred thousand is less than 6 percent of the number of unemployed. Both parties have suddenly discovered that the country's infrastructure – highways, bridges, dams, sewage systems, etc. – is in a terrible state of disrepair, so that's where the jobless should be put to work. Two questions: If our infrastructure is falling to pieces, whose fault is it anyway? And why pretend that fixing it up is a jobs-creation program?

Another point to keep in mind. Fixing up infrastructure is what is usually called "public works." And long experience, especially but not only in the 30s, has conclusively shown that doing a decent job of it requires careful planning, takes a lot of time, needs substantial amounts of capital equipment, and creates relatively few jobs per dollar of expenditure.

So much for what the politicians are talking about. It has nothing to do with what the people need and should be demanding: jobs tailored for millions of people with specific skills, aptitudes, backgrounds, interests—acting jobs for actors, teaching jobs for teachers, writing jobs for writers, the list is endless. And the WPA under Harry Hopkins proved that it can be done, not perfectly of course but a hell of a lot better than anyone dreamed beforehand. And with WPA experience to draw on, it could be done even better today than it was a half century ago.

What about size? The country is a lot richer than it was in the 1930s and so could afford a much bigger job-creating program now than then. But let's be modest. At least for starters let's aim for a program of about the same size as that which was set in motion by the Congress elected, with a greatly expanded pro-Roosevelt majority, in 1934. In its first session in 1935 it voted a jobs appropriation bill of $5 billion. What would that come to today? Consumer prices have increased sevenfold between 1935 and 1982, so the equivalent sum today would be $35 billion. But the population has also gone up – from 128 million to 230 million, i.e., by about 80 percent. If we adjust for this too, we find that a jobs program equivalent to 1935's $5-billion effort would cost just about $63 billion today.

We suggest in all seriousness that this is precisely what the people should demand.

Where should the money come from? Why, straight from the Pentagon of course. After all, compared to a WPA the Pentagon creates very few jobs per billion dollars spent!

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